WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method suitable for an image forming system which comprises a plurality of devices including at least one of an image forming device which can print data in a storage unit that can store data of a plurality of jobs including data of a first job and data of a second job which is input after the data of the first job, and a sheet processing device which can execute a sheet process for a sheet printed by the image forming device, comprising:

a scheduling control step suited to set a schedule associated with a plurality of work flows including a first work flow that includes a plurality of process steps using a plurality of devices of the image forming system required to complete the first job, and a second work flow that includes a plurality of process steps using a plurality of devices of the image forming system required to complete the second job; and

an instruction step suited to selectively input a plurality of instructions including first and second instructions,

wherein the scheduling control step includes a step of setting, when the first instruction is input, a first schedule which is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job, and a step of setting, when the second

instruction is input, a second schedule which is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the instruction step includes a step of inputting a third instruction, and

the scheduling control step includes a step of setting, when the third instruction is input, a third schedule which is scheduled to execute a work flow in consideration of cost upon processing a job in the image forming system.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the instruction step includes a step of inputting a fourth instruction, and

the scheduling control step includes a step of setting, when the fourth instruction is input, a fourth schedule which is scheduled to execute a work flow in consideration of quality upon processing a job in the image forming system.

4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising a device control step suited to control, when the first schedule is set, the plurality of devices of the image forming system to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job, and to control, when the second schedule

is set, the plurality of devices of the image forming system to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the device control step includes a step of controlling, when the third schedule is set, the plurality of devices of the image forming system to execute a work flow in consideration of cost upon processing a job in the image forming system.

6. The method according to claim 4, wherein the device control step includes a step of controlling, when the fourth schedule is set, the plurality of devices of the image forming system to execute a work flow in consideration of quality upon processing a job in the image forming system.

7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising a memory control step of storing the schedule information set in the scheduling control step in a memory.

8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising an informing control step of controlling a user interface unit to execute an informing process of schedule information associated with a scheduling result set in the scheduling control step, and

wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling the user interface unit to inform

different kinds of schedule information depending on whether the first or second instruction is input.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the informing control step includes steps of:

controlling, when the first instruction is input, the user interface unit to execute an informing process of first schedule information that allows a user to identify that it is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job; and

controlling, when the second instruction is input, the user interface unit to execute an informing process of second schedule information that allows a user to identify that it is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

10. The method according to claim 8, wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling, when the third instruction is input, the user interface unit to execute an informing process of third schedule information that allows a user to identify that it is scheduled to execute a work flow in consideration of cost upon processing a job in the image forming system.

11. The method according to claim 8, wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling,

when the fourth instruction is input, the user interface unit to execute an informing process of fourth schedule information that allows a user to identify that it is scheduled to execute a work flow in consideration of quality upon processing a job in the image forming system.

12. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming system has at least one of a device which can execute a job order process, a device which can execute a job edit process, a device which can execute a job proof process, and a device which can execute a job archiving process, and also the image forming device and the sheet processing device, and

the scheduling control step includes a step of setting a schedule suited to execute a work flow having a plurality of process steps including a print process step using the image forming device and a sheet process step using the sheet processing device.

13. The method according to claim 1, wherein the scheduling control step includes a step of setting a schedule suited to execute a work flow including a plurality of process steps using the plurality of devices, and an operator intervention work.

14. The method according to claim 13, further comprising an informing control step of controlling a user interface unit to inform schedule information

associated with a scheduling result set in the scheduling control step, and

wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling the user interface unit to inform first type schedule information that allows a user to confirm an execution order of the plurality of process steps using the plurality of devices required to execute the work flow, and controlling the user interface to inform second type schedule information that allows the user to confirm an operator intervention work required to execute the work flow.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling the user interface unit to inform the first type schedule information and then the second type schedule information.

16. The method according to claim 14, wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling the user interface unit to inform the second type schedule information and then the first type schedule information.

17. The method according to claim 14, further comprising an informing mode selection step of selecting one of a first schedule informing mode of informing the first type schedule information, and a second schedule informing mode of informing the second type schedule information, and

wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling the user interface unit to operate in the informing mode selected in the informing mode selection step.

18. The method according to claim 14, wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling the user interface unit to prompt to input authentication data when the user interface unit informs the second type schedule information of the first type schedule information and the second type schedule information.

19. The method according to claim 14, wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling the user interface unit to identifiably inform the first type schedule information for respective jobs when the user interface unit informs the first type schedule information of the first type schedule information and the second type schedule information.

20. The method according to claim 14, wherein the informing control step includes a step of identifiably informing the second type schedule information for respective users when the user interface unit informs the second type schedule information of the first type schedule information and the second type schedule information.

21. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an interrupt print

function which interrupts a print job, a print process of which is in progress, and can execute a print process of another print job, and

said method further comprises a device control step of inhibiting execution of the interrupt print function, when the first schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is not ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job.

22. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an interrupt print function which interrupts a print job, a print process of which is in progress, and can execute a print process of another print job, and

said method further comprises a device control step of permitting execution of the interrupt print function, when the first schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job.

23. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an overtake print function which can execute a print process of the second print job prior to the first print job upon

completion of another print job, a print process of which is in progress, and

said method further comprises a device control step of inhibiting execution of the overtake print function, when the first schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is not ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job.

24. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an overtake print which can execute a print process of the second print job prior to the first print job upon completion of another print job, a print process of which is in progress, and

said method further comprises a device control step of permitting execution of the overtake print function, when the first schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job.

25. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an expanded application function including any of a facsimile transmission function, a network scanner function, and a preview function, and

said method further comprises a device control step of inhibiting execution of the expanded application function, when the first schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is not ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job.

26. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an expanded application function including any of a facsimile transmission function, a network scanner function, and a preview function, and

said method further comprises a device control step of permitting execution of the expanded application function, when the first schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job.

27. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an interrupt print function which interrupts a print job, a print process of which is in progress, and can execute a print process of another print job, and

said method further comprises a device control step of inhibiting execution of the interrupt print function, when the second schedule is set in the

scheduling control step and when a state of the image forming system is a third state in which the image forming system is ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

28. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an interrupt print function which interrupts a print job, a print process of which is in progress, and can execute a print process of another print job, and

said method further comprises a device control step of permitting execution of the interrupt print function, when the second schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is not ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

29. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an overtake print which can execute a print process of the second print job prior to the first print job upon completion of another print job, a print process of which is in progress, and

said method further comprises a device control step of permitting execution of the overtake print function, when the second schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming

system is ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

30. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an overtake print which can execute a print process of the second print job prior to the first print job upon completion of another print job, a print process of which is in progress, and

said method further comprises a device control step of inhibiting execution of the overtake print function, when the second schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is not ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

31. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an expanded application function including any of a facsimile transmission function, a network scanner function, and a preview function, and

said method further comprises a device control step of permitting execution of the expanded application function, when the second schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job,

before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

32. The method according to claim 1, wherein the image forming device comprises an expanded application function including any of a facsimile transmission function, a network scanner function, and a preview function, and

said method further comprises a device control step of inhibiting execution of the expanded application function, when the second schedule is set in the scheduling control step and when the image forming system is not ready to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job.

33. The method according to claim 1, wherein the scheduling control step includes a step of setting a schedule suited to execute a work flow including a plurality of process steps using the plurality of devices, and a plurality of intervention works by an operator, and

said method further comprises an informing control step of controlling a user interface unit to inform information that allows the operator to confirm an intervention work to be done immediately after an intervention work executed by the operator of the

plurality of intervention works required to execute the work flow.

34. The method according to claim 33, wherein the informing control step includes a step of controlling a portable terminal which can be carried by the operator to inform the information.

35. The method according to claim 1, wherein the scheduling control step includes a step of scheduling work flows of a plurality of jobs which include any of a job of data output from a computer, a job of data output from a scanner, a job of data output from a digital camera, and a job of data output from a storage medium.

36. The method according to claim 1, wherein the scheduling control step includes a step of setting a schedule of work flows using data suitable for a JDF (Job Definition Format) format.

37. An image forming system which comprises a plurality of devices including at least one of an image forming device which can print data in a storage unit that can store data of a plurality of jobs including data of a first job and data of a second job which is input after the data of the first job, and a sheet processing device which can execute a sheet process for a sheet printed by the image forming device, comprising:

scheduling control means suited to set a schedule associated with a plurality of work flows including a first work flow that includes a plurality of process steps using a plurality of devices of said image forming system required to complete the first job, and a second work flow that includes a plurality of process steps using a plurality of devices of said image forming system required to complete the second job; and

instruction means suited to selectively input a plurality of instructions including first and second instructions,

wherein said scheduling control means can set a first schedule which is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job, when the first instruction is input, and can set a second schedule which is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job, when the second instruction is input.

38. A program for making an image forming system, which comprises a plurality of devices including at least one of an image forming device which can print data in a storage unit that can store data of a plurality of jobs including data of a first job and data of a second job which is input after the data of

the first job, and a sheet processing device which can execute a sheet process for a sheet printed by the image forming device, execute:

a scheduling control sequence suited to set a schedule associated with a plurality of work flows including a first work flow that includes a plurality of process steps using a plurality of devices of said image forming system required to complete the first job, and a second work flow that includes a plurality of process steps using a plurality of devices of said image forming system required to complete the second job; and

an instruction sequence suited to selectively input a plurality of instructions including first and second instructions,

wherein the scheduling control sequence can set a first schedule which is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, after completion of the first work flow for the first job, when the first instruction is input, and can set a second schedule which is scheduled to complete the second work flow for the second job input after the first job, before completion of the first work flow for the first job, when the second instruction is input.

39. A storage medium storing a program of claim 38.

40. An image forming system comprising:

job acceptance means for accepting a print job and a print instruction;

a plurality of step control means for respectively controlling a plurality of steps for the print job;

scheduling means for scheduling the steps; and

process control means for managing the steps on the basis of a scheduling result of said scheduling means.

41. An image forming system comprising:

job acceptance means for accepting a print job and a print instruction;

pre-print process control means for controlling a pre-print process step that applies a pre-print process to the print job accepted by said job acceptance means in accordance with the print instruction;

print process control means for controlling a print process step that applies a print process to the print job that has undergone the pre-print process;

post-print process control means for controlling a post-print process step that applies a post-print process to the print job that has undergone the print process;

scheduling means for scheduling the steps; and

process control means for managing a schedule of the steps on the basis of a scheduling result of said scheduling means.

42. An image forming system comprising:

job acceptance means for accepting a print job and a print instruction;

edit process control means for controlling an edit process step that applies an edit process to the print job accepted by said job acceptance means in accordance with the print instruction;

proof process control means for controlling a proof process step that applies a proof process to the print job that has undergone the edit process;

print process control means for controlling a print process step that applies a print process to the print job that has undergone the proof process;

finishing process control means for controlling a finishing process step that applies a finishing process to the print job that has undergone the print process;

delivery process control means for controlling a delivery process step that applies a delivery process to the print job that has undergone the finishing process;

scheduling means for scheduling the steps; and

process control means for managing a schedule of the steps on the basis of a scheduling result of said scheduling means.

43. An image forming system comprising:

job acceptance means for accepting a print job and a print instruction;

image scanning means for scanning image data from a paper document;

edit process control means for controlling an edit process step that applies an edit process to the print job accepted by said job acceptance means or a print job based on the image data scanned by said image scanning means in accordance with the print instruction;

proof process control means for controlling a proof process step that applies a proof process to the print job that has undergone the edit process;

print process control means for controlling a print process step that applies a print process to the print job that has undergone the proof process;

finishing process control means for controlling a finishing process step that applies a finishing process to the print job that has undergone the print process;

delivery process control means for controlling a delivery process step that applies a delivery process to the print job that has undergone the finishing process;

scheduling means for scheduling the steps; and

process control means for managing a schedule of the steps on the basis of a scheduling result of said scheduling means.

44. The system according to claim 40, further comprising display means for displaying the schedule of

the steps managed by said process control means, and times required for the steps.

45. The system according to claim 40, further comprising selection means for selecting one or a plurality of modes from a plurality of scheduling modes, and

said scheduling means schedules the steps on the basis of the one or plurality of scheduling modes selected by said selection means.

46. The system according to claim 40, wherein said scheduling means schedules the steps on the basis of an acceptance order of print jobs by said job acceptance means.

47. The system according to claim 40, wherein said scheduling means schedules the steps while giving priority to a delivery date of the print job.

48. The system according to claim 40, wherein said scheduling means schedules the steps while giving priority to cost of the print job.

49. The system according to claim 40, wherein said scheduling means schedules the steps while giving priority to quality of the print job.

50. The system according to claim 40, wherein said scheduling means schedules the steps while giving priority to optimization or operating efficiency of said image forming system.

51. The system according to claim 45, wherein the plurality of scheduling modes include a print job acceptance order priority mode, print job priority mode, print job cost priority mode, print job time schedule priority mode, image forming system optimization priority mode, and image forming system operating efficiency priority mode.

52. The system according to claim 45, wherein said selection means can re-select even after scheduling by said scheduling means.

53. The system according to claim 40, wherein said scheduling means checks a schedule or schedules of one or a plurality of already scheduled jobs upon scheduling a print job accepted by said job acceptance means, and re-schedules the steps of the accepted job and the one or plurality of already scheduled jobs when the schedule or schedules of the one or plurality of already scheduled jobs can be changed.

54. The system according to claim 40, wherein said job acceptance means accepts the print job and print instruction via a service using a Web browser via the Internet.

55. A method of controlling an image forming system, comprising:

a job acceptance step of accepting a print job and a print instruction;

a plurality of step control steps of respectively controlling a plurality of steps for the print job;

a scheduling step of scheduling the steps; and

a process control step of managing the steps on the basis of a scheduling result in the scheduling step.

56. A program for implementing a method of controlling an image forming system of claim 55.

57. A storage medium computer-readably storing a program for implementing a method of controlling an image forming system of claim 55.

58. An image forming system which can execute an image forming process including a plurality of steps, comprising:

process control means for managing the plurality of steps and issuing work instructions to workers who execute works.

59. The system according to claim 58, further comprising display means for displaying the work instructions from said process control means.

60. The system according to claim 58, further comprising worker identification means for identifying the workers who execute works, and

wherein said process control means issues the work instructions to the workers identified by said worker identification means.

61. The system according to claim 58, further comprising scheduling means for scheduling the works of the workers who execute works for respective steps, and

wherein said process control means issues the work instructions to the workers who execute works on the basis of a scheduling result of said scheduling means.

62. The system according to claim 60, further comprising scheduling means for scheduling the works of the workers identified by said worker identification means for respective steps.

63. The system according to claim 58, further comprising job acceptance means for accepting a print job and a print instruction, and

wherein the plurality of steps include a pre-print process step that applies a pre-print process to the print job accepted by said job acceptance means in accordance with the print instruction, a print process step that applies a print process to the print job that has undergone the pre-print process, and a post-print process step that applies a post-print process to the print job that has undergone the print process.

64. The system according to claim 58, further comprising job acceptance means for accepting a print job and a print instruction, and

wherein the plurality of steps include an edit process step that applies an edit process to the print job accepted by said job acceptance means in accordance with the print instruction, a proof process step that applies a proof process to the print job that has undergone the edit process, a print process step that applies a print process to the print job that has undergone the proof process, a finishing process step that applies a finishing process to the print job that has undergone the print process, and a delivery process step that applies a delivery process to the print job that has undergone the finishing process.

65. The system according to claim 58, further comprising:

job acceptance means for accepting a print job and a print instruction; and

image scanning means for scanning image data from a paper document, and

wherein the plurality of steps include an edit process step that applies an edit process to the print job accepted by said job acceptance means or a print job based on the image data scanned by said image scanning means in accordance with the print instruction, a proof process step that applies a proof process to the print job that has undergone the edit process, a print process step that applies a print process to the print job that has undergone the proof process, a

finishing process step that applies a finishing process to the print job that has undergone the print process, and a delivery process step that applies a delivery process to the print job that has undergone the finishing process.

66. The system according to claim 60, wherein said worker identification means comprises an ID card which stores information including a worker's name, identification number, department name, skill, and work history.

67. The system according to claim 59, wherein said display means comprises a display unit of a device used by each worker in each step.

68. The system according to claim 67, wherein the display unit of a device used by each worker in each step includes a display unit of a computer, a display unit of a printing device, and a display unit attached to a cart or the like.

69. The system according to claim 59, wherein said display unit comprises a display unit of a portable terminal which can be carried by each worker.

70. The system according to claim 59, wherein the portable terminal can wirelessly receive the work instruction from said process control means.

71. The system according to claim 69, further comprising worker identification means for identifying the workers who execute works, and

wherein the portable terminal acquires identification information from said worker identification means and wirelessly informs said process control means of the acquired identification information.

72. The system according to claim 58, further comprising a plurality of step control means for respectively controlling the plurality of steps, and

wherein said step control means and said process control means communicate with each other using a JDF (Job Definition Format) format.

73. A method of controlling an image forming system which can execute an image forming process including a plurality of steps, comprising:

a process control step of managing the plurality of steps and issuing work instructions to workers who execute works.

74. A program for implementing a method of controlling an image forming system of claim 73.

75. A storage medium computer-readably storing a program for implementing a method of controlling an image forming system of claim 73.